

The ***Polar Bear Express***

October 2015

**“Poly Drives Students
to Succeed”**



Poly Drive Elementary School

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Dear Poly Drive Families,

It has been a very busy fall but we are off to another beautiful start. A big thank you goes out to our PTA and the community for our technology levy – in combination they helped us reach our goal of providing a Chromebook for each of our 3rd-6th grade students. Ask your child how they are using these devices each day and I think you will be surprised at how they are quickly becoming a tool that is accessed multiple times daily. These devices have also freed up our 2 laptop labs, which are now more readily available for our primary students.

Poly Drive is one of six schools this year that has adopted Project Lead the Way (PLTW), which is a hands-on science curriculum. Teachers have received some initial training and will be implementing it in the classrooms this November.

We are very fortunate to have some excellent people working with our students in general duty positions at crosswalk and during lunch. This year we are having some difficulty finding people to cover these positions when our regulars are gone. We have the option to try a general call-out system but we are never guaranteed someone that we would want working with our children or even anybody at all. I've found that people that are invested in a school, such as parents or grandparents, tend to be excellent folks to bring on board. If you can spare a day occasionally to help our children please call and let us know.

This is tied to a conversation I had with all the students regarding crossing safety. Three students in Billings Public schools have been hit by vehicles in the past three weeks. Please take some time with your children to discuss how to cross a street safely and include the perspective as a driver.

The Coffee with Croff in September generated some incredible conversation and I received some excellent feedback. I'd like to keep that momentum going with some discussion of report cards vs. “testing” and revisit the boundary changes. We will resume at 8:30 on Wednesday the 14th so please join me for coffee, treats and conversation. Please RSVP me at croffk@billingschools.org or call 281-6217 so I can prepare for an appropriate number of parents.

MSUB students will host Math Night Thursday the 22nd at 6:30. If you attended the past couple of years you know what a great job they do and I'm sure it will be even better this year.

Thank you for such a smooth start to the school year - please let me know if you have questions or if there is anything we can do to make Poly Drive a better place.

**BEA
KAREN COX
MEMORIAL
SCHOLARSHIP**

The BEA Karen Cox Memorial Scholarship Fund provides \$500 scholarships to graduating seniors that are children of teachers in our district. This memorial was started in memory of Karen Cox, a teacher in this district, who tragically died in a car accident.

This year's fundraiser for the scholarship fund is a basket auction and each school is putting together one basket to be auctioned off. Poly drive has chosen to create a Montana basket. Anyone interested in donating an item for our basket can bring it to Hannah Monson no later than Oct. 21st.

Stay tuned to find out when you can view and bid on the baskets!



**POLY DRIVE
MATH NIGHT**

Get ready for MATH NIGHT in the Poly Drive School gym! 6:30-7:30 p.m. on Thursday, October 22nd. Games, puzzles, prizes and math fun for all grade levels. Math Night is brought to you by future teachers from MSU-B.



LIBRARY NEWS

By Mrs. Caskey

Book Check Out:

Just a friendly reminder that books are checked out for one week in the library. If a student is reading a longer book, they are welcome to renew the check out.

Coming Soon:

Poly Geek Squad is an opportunity for students to serve as tech support at Poly Drive. The Geek Squad will meet Monday and Friday at 7:45am. Poly Geek Squad is open to 4-6 graders by application. If your child is interested, they can visit the Poly Drive library site, scroll to the very bottom and fill out the application. The start date has not been determined yet.

Book Fair a HUGE Success:

Thank you so very much for the support we received at the book fair this year. We raised almost \$900 for the library and all of that was used to purchase new books! What a great community we have at Poly.



SCHOOL CALENDAR

October

| | |
|--------------------------------|-------|
| Walk/Bike To School Week | 5-9 |
| Elem Cross Country Meet | 6 |
| Pioneer Park - | |
| First race starts at 4:15 | |
| PTA Meeting 6:30 library | 13 |
| Coffee w/ Croff, RSVP, 8:30 | 14 |
| Early-Out Day, 12:00 | 14 |
| Teachers in training | |
| No School | 15-16 |
| Math Night 6:30 | 22 |
| End of 1 st Quarter | 30 |

November

| | |
|-------------------------------|-------|
| Day Light Savings Ends | 1 |
| Picture Re-Takes 8:30-9:30 | 4 |
| Early Out Day, 12:00 | 4-6 |
| Parent Teacher Conferences | |
| PTA Meeting, 3:15 pm | 10 |
| Veterans Day Breakfast 7:30 | 11 |
| Pizza w/ Principal RSVP 12:00 | 13 |
| Butter Braid Fundraiser | 18 |
| Begins | |
| Early Out Day, 12:00 | 24 |
| Thanksgiving – No School | 25-27 |



Active News

By Mrs. Reas

PEAK Updates

Check out our calendar of events at peakmt.org

Congratulations to all of the PEAK Cross Country Participants! You did an amazing job this season! Way to work hard and represent your school with pride!

PEAK Fitness Club will continue for grades 4th, 5th, and 6th on Mondays and Wednesdays from 3:05-3:35.

PEAK Flag Football will be held for grades 4th, 5th, and 6th on Wednesday and Friday afternoons from 3:05-3:35

1st Flag Football will be Wednesday October 21st

KINDNESS AND COMPASSION CLUB

The Poly Drive KC Club meets each Wednesday at 8:05 in the gym. Starting with the "Poly Kindness Pledge", students then begin sharing links for

"Random Acts of Kindness", and much, much, more. Here a few reasons why students wanted to become a member of the KC Club:

"I care about other people and like to help." – 4th grader Molly DeBusk

"I feel like the KC Club makes the school a better place and I want to be a part of it." – 4th grader Addison Snow

"I love to help others." – 4th grader Ella Shelden



LUNCH TIMES

You are always welcome to join your child for lunch! An adult lunch cost \$3.50.

| | |
|-----------------------|-------------|
| Kindergarten | 11:10-11:45 |
| 1 st Grade | 11:35-12:10 |
| 2 nd Grade | 11:15-11:50 |
| 3 rd Grade | 11:40-12:15 |
| 4 th Grade | 12:05-12:40 |
| 5 th Grade | 12:00-12:35 |
| 6 th Grade | 12:25-1:00 |



PARKING ISSUES

As you know Poly Drive School has struggled for several years with traffic issues on our campus. As the neighborhood grew we were pinched in and options are limited. However, student safety is paramount.

Please remember that the north entrance (main entrance near the flag pole) is not to be used for the dropping off and picking up of children at entry and dismissal times. This is a safety issue during a high traffic volume time.

GOT PTA?

Check out the website for upcoming events and dates of interest at:

polydrivepta.com

NOTES FROM THE PTA

Thanks so much to all of our returning and new PTA Members. We have added online registration that makes it very easy to join and help out in our school. The link can be found on our website and our Facebook page.

Poly PTA provides activities, volunteers and financial support throughout the school. Just one of our goals for this year is to increase safety at the school, including bumpers for the playground and sharing with School District 2, the cost of snow removal equipment for our new sidewalks and entry at Poly. In addition to funding traditional clubs and activities including social activities and educational enrichment, we will be presenting a budget that focuses on STEM, Science, Technology, Engineering and Math, at the next PTA meeting, October 13, 6:30 pm in the Library. Please consider joining us!

POLY PTA MEMBERSHIP AND DIRECTORY FAQs

What is it and why should my family be in it?

Membership in the PTA is a great way to be connected to Poly Drive and your student. The Directory is a private members only publication provided to PTA Members to make it easy to contact friends from school for birthdays, playdates and other social occasions. It is a wonderful resource for all things Poly.

How do I join the PTA and when will I get the Directory?

You can join online via the link on our website, www.polydrivepta.com or by going to our Facebook Page, Poly Drive Elementary PTA. There are paper forms available at the school or can be requested to be sent home via email to



polypta@billingsschools.org. You can also join on your smartphone here:

I am so busy can I just write a check to support the school?

Of course! We understand that parents want to share their resources, be it time or money, in ways that are convenient to them. Donations can be directed to the POLY PTA. A receipt will be sent to you. Thank you!

We are still in need of volunteers and Chairpersons for the following Activities:

1. Skate Night-hanging posters and arranging for \$ collection from the rink
2. Veteran's Day Breakfast-coordination of celebratory breakfast for Veterans in our school community.
3. Barnes and Noble Day-fundraiser event that provides a percentage of sales back to our school.
4. Reflections Art Program-National PTA program to participate in the arts and be recognized for original works in six categories. Local winners go on to district/regional and state levels.
5. Pastries for Parents-coordinate a morning of coffee and treats for parents and families of Poly students.

On September 17th, Kids in Motion and Poly PTA Volunteers tuned up 49 bikes. In a frenzied 2 hours, bikes were "slimed", pumped, and sent off to a professional bike mechanic for brake and gear adjustments. Many tires, grips and brakes were replaced just in time for Walk/Bike to Schools Week coming up October 5-9, where students can get sponsors and get healthy, earning prizes and classroom parties.

Saturday Live was a great success for Poly. With a Bungee Run, Mystery Doors, Coffee and Caramel Corn, we raised \$700 more than we did last year. It was great fun and a great thanks goes out to our many dedicated volunteers, which included teachers, staff, parents and students of Poly Drive.



BULLYING: Bully behavior occurs when there is deliberate intent to harm, dominate, inflict pain, exclude or otherwise cause distress to the person being targeted. The person who bullies purposefully misuses his/her power (size, age, popularity, confidence, verbal ability), usually repeatedly. The balance of power between the bully and target is NOT EQUAL.

School Homework Skills

During grade school, kids start getting homework for the first time to reinforce and extend classroom learning and help them practice important study skills.

By doing homework, kids learn how to:

- read and follow directions independently
- manage and budget time (for long-term assignments like book reports)
- complete work neatly and to the best of their ability

It also helps them develop a sense of responsibility, pride in a job well done, and a work ethic that will benefit them well beyond the classroom.

Parents can give kids lots of homework help, primarily by making homework a priority and helping them develop good study habits.

Setting Up Shop

The kitchen or dining room table is a popular workspace for younger children; they may feel more comfortable being near you, and you can provide encouragement and assistance. Older kids might prefer to retreat to their rooms, but check in periodically and review the homework when it's completed.

Wherever kids do homework, it's important to make sure their workspace is:

- well-lit
- comfortable
- stocked with school supplies (pens, pencils, paper, stapler, calculator, ruler, etc.) and references (dictionary, thesaurus)
- quiet and free from distractions — TV, video games, phone calls, or other family members

If kids need a computer for schoolwork, try to set it up in a common space, not in a bedroom, so you can discourage playing video games, chatting with or emailing friends, or surfing the Internet for fun during study time. Also consider [parental controls](#), available through your Internet service provider (ISP), and software that blocks and filters any inappropriate material. Find out which sites your kids' teachers recommend and bookmark them for easy access.

A Parent's Supporting Role

When it comes to homework, be there to offer support and guidance, answer questions, help interpret assignment instructions, and review the completed work. But resist the urge to provide the right answers or complete assignments.

Focus on helping kids develop the problem-solving skills they'll need to get through this assignment and any others, and offer your encouragement as they do. They'll develop confidence and a love of learning from doing it themselves.

Here are more tips to help make homework easier for kids:

- **Establish a routine.** Send the message that schoolwork is a top priority with ground rules like setting a regular time and place each day for homework to be done. And make it clear that there's no TV, phone calls, video game-playing, etc., until homework is done and checked.
- **Strategize for homework sessions.** Teach kids to take stock of how much homework there is and what it involves so they can create a strategy that fits their workloads and temperaments. Some kids might want to tackle the harder assignments first — when mental energy levels are highest — while others prefer to get the easier tasks over with. By helping them approach homework with a strategy when they're young, you'll teach your kids to do that independently later. Allow them to take a break if needed, then guide them back to the homework with fresh focus and energy.
- **Instill organization skills.** No one is born with great [organizational skills](#) — they're learned and practiced over time. Most kids first encounter multiple teachers and classrooms in middle school, when organization becomes a key to succeeding. Teach your child how to use a calendar or personal planner to help get organized.
- **Apply school to the "real world."** Talk about how what they're learning now applies outside the classroom, such as the importance of meeting deadlines — just like adults in the work world — or how the topics in history class relate to what's happening in today's news.
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